

# Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

## STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

“As a school of the Sacred Heart, Stuartholme is dedicated to providing steadfast support and safety to students, children and young people to assist them in development of their faith, intelligence, civility, compassion and growth.

As an establishment, we are devoted to the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of all young people, fostering an environment of care and protection by implementing educational services to teachers and students in order to prevent misconduct, and provide support to those in need.

Our organisation values of intellect, faith, respect, care and individuality represent the culture that we are committed to achieving and promoting.”

*Written in consultation with the 2022 Cor-Unum Student Leadership Committee*

Stuartholme School has zero-tolerance of child abuse and all allegations and safety concerns are treated seriously and are consistent with our Student Protection Processes and Guidelines. The School is committed to providing the necessary resources to ensure compliance with all relevant child protection laws and regulations.

Our approach to risk management recognises the potential risks to students in the school context and considers online, physical and psychological environments, and any vulnerable or diverse circumstances of students enrolled at Stuartholme School.

Stuartholme is committed to equity and diversity and respects and promotes the rights of students to participate in decision making, noting the particular needs of students who are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders, have a disability, are from culturally or linguistically diverse backgrounds, identify as LGBTIQI, or are unable to live at home.

## DEFINITIONS

Blue Card/Exemption Card (or positive notice blue card/exemption card) is a card issued by the Department of Justice and Attorney-General (DJAC) once checks have been completed to assess if a person is eligible to work in the areas of child-related work covered by the Act.

Harm is defined as ‘any detrimental effect of a significant nature on a child’s physical, psychological or emotional wellbeing.’ (Section 9 of the Child Protection Act 1999). Disclosure of harm is when someone, including a child, discloses that harm has happened, is happening or is likely to happen to a child.

Restricted employment refers to situations or exemptions that allow a person to work with children without a blue card.

Restricted person is a person who either:

- has been issued a negative notice;
- has a suspended blue card;
- is a disqualified person; or
- has been charged with a disqualifying offence that has not been finalised.

Suspicion of Harm is when someone has a reasonable suspicion that a child has suffered, is suffering or is at unacceptable risk of suffering significant harm.

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Worker includes:

- Employees (full time, part time, casual or fixed term)
- Supply, relief, aide, volunteer, placed or work experience teachers
- Contractors or sub-contractors
- Volunteers
- Members of the Board

## IMPLEMENTATION

In practice, Stuartholme School's commitment to acting in accordance with the *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000* (Qld) ("the **Act**") to promote the safety and wellbeing of students means that it will implement the measures outlined below.

### 1. Code of Conduct

Stuartholme School has developed Codes of Conduct for Staff, Board Members and Parents and Visitors outlining the expected standards of behaviour for all people interacting with children and young people.

#### *a) Staff Code of Conduct*

Workers will avoid, by word or action, any influence upon students that is contrary to the teachings and values expressed by the Catholic Church in whose name they act.

Workers have a responsibility to meet high standards of professional and ethical behaviour required by the employer when interacting with students, their families and the wider community. They are to undertake their responsibilities within the framework of the law, including following any lawful and reasonable instructions from their employer. Workers must comply with legislative and industrial requirements, with this Code of Conduct and any policies or procedures that are implemented by Stuartholme School.

Workers owe a duty of care to students. This duty of care is to take reasonable steps to protect students from a reasonably foreseeable risk of injury. This duty applies equally to any activities involving Stuartholme School. Workers must actively seek to prevent harm to students, and to support those who have been harmed.

Specific responsibilities include:

- workers should avoid situations where they are alone with a student;
- workers must ensure that social interactions with students do not give grounds for allegations against them;
- workers must treat students with respect and targeted sarcasm, derogatory remarks and belittling comments are not acceptable;
- when physical contact with a student is a necessary part of the teaching/coaching/learning experience, Workers must exercise caution to ensure that the contact is appropriate and acceptable for the duty to be performed; and
- it is expected that Workers will be caring, compassionate adults who take an interest in students and who set appropriate boundaries within employee-student relationships (i.e. professional boundaries).

#### *b) Board Code of Conduct*

The purpose of the Board Code of Conduct is to provide clear direction for Board Members to follow when performing their duties. Each Director acknowledges that his/her position on the Board involves important legal and ethical responsibilities and a commitment to upholding the values of good corporate citizenship, in both individual conduct and in corporate actions.

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## *c) Parental and Visitor Code of Conduct*

The Goals of the Sacred Heart Education frame every activity and interaction at Stuartholme School. We strive to create a community that lives out the spirit of Cor Unum – which means ‘One Heart’. This Code of Conduct is underpinned by the third goal of the Sacred Heart Education – The Building of Community as a Christian Value. Stuartholme strives to develop and nurture a strong sense of community underpinned by Christian values. The Parental and Visitor Code of Conduct outlines expectations of their behaviour in all dealings with the School.

## *d) Student Positive Expectations and Behaviour Guidelines*

These guidelines promote effective partnerships between the Leadership Team, Leaders of Student Wellbeing, Teacher Mentors, Teaches, Boarding and Administrative Staff and parents. It strives to promote the support for and respect of each student and sustain strong, positive relationships. It outlines the processes to provide efficient resolution of issues. It recognises that students are in, formation and facilitates student wellbeing through the adoption of professional best practices. This is printed in the Student Planner and is available on myStuartholme Portal.

## **2. Recruitment, Selection, Training and Management**

Stuartholme School is committed to recruiting, selecting, training and managing employees in such a way that limits risks to students. The School adheres to policies and procedures in relation to employment which are contained in the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000, Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Regulation 2011, Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 and Regulation and the Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005.

### *1. Recruitment and Selection*

Stuartholme School will ensure that its recruitment and selection procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to children from employees via:

- Accurate position descriptions, including whether the successful applicant must be a teacher registered with the Queensland College of Teachers (who has been subject to relevant police and other safety checks), whether a Working with Children Blue Card/Exemption Card is necessary for the successful applicant, the responsibilities and supervision associated with the position, the nature and environment of the service provided to students, and the experience and qualifications required by the successful applicant.
- Advertising the position with a clear statement about the school’s commitment to safe and supportive work practices and identifying that candidates will be subject to a teacher registration check or Working with Children Blue Card screening, a police check, referee checks, identification verification and the requirement to disclose any information relevant to the candidates’ eligibility to engage in activities including children.
- A selection process that includes assessing the application via an interview process and referee and other checks (as identified above) based on the accurate position description.
- A probationary period of employment, which allows the school to further assess the suitability of the new employee and to act as a check on the selection process.

### *2. Training and Management of employees*

Stuartholme School will ensure that its training and management procedures act to reduce the risk of harm to students from employees via:

- Management processes that are consistent, fair and supportive.

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- Performance management processes to help employees to improve their performance in a positive manner.
- Supportive processes for staff when they are experiencing challenges, such as mentoring, mediation, conflict resolution, coaching, additional training, and external support and counselling services.
- An induction program which thoroughly addresses the school's policies and procedures, particularly its expectations regarding student risk management and to assist employees to understand their role in providing a safe and supportive environment for students.
- Annual training new and existing staff on an ongoing basis to enhance skills and knowledge and to reduce exposure to risks, as follows:
  - the school's policies and procedures;
  - identifying, assessing and minimising risks to students;
  - handling a disclosure or suspicion of harm to a child; and
  - failure to report and failure to protect laws.
- Keeping a record of the training provided to employees.
- Exit interviews to assist the school to identify broader issues of concern that may impact on the safety and wellbeing of students at the school.
- Nominate responsible persons to monitor the expiry dates of Blue Cards and Exemption Cards and remind staff to keep their cards up to date.

Where there is a complaint or allegation in relation to an employee of inappropriate behaviour, unsatisfactory performance or misconduct, the Principal will take all appropriate management action, which may include requiring employees to undertake additional training, mentoring employees, suspending an employee or dismissal. All employees are provided with access to an Employee Assistance Program to give free and confidential counselling to employees.

### 3. Handling Disclosures or Suspicions of Harm

The Student Protection Policy, Processes and Guidelines developed by the Queensland Catholic Education Commission (QCEC) provides a process for all staff to recognise, respond and report allegations or suspicions of:

- sexual abuse/likely sexual abuse of students;
- harm or risk of harm to students caused by physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect;
- inappropriate behaviour of staff to students.

To report any type of harm, all staff members should use the [Student Protection Reporting Form](#) available from the School website. The Student Protection Processes and Guidelines are available for employees, parents and students on the College website and myStuartholme Portal.

Furthermore, and in accordance with section 76 of the *Education (Queensland College of Teachers) Act 2005*, the Principal of Stuartholme School will report to the Queensland College of Teachers any investigations into allegations of harm caused, or likely to be caused, to a student because of the conduct of a relevant teacher at the school.

### 4. Managing Breaches of this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy

Stuartholme School is committed to appropriately managing breaches of this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy in accordance with its other relevant policies as appropriate in the circumstances, such as the Student Protection Processes and Guidelines, Staff Code of Conduct, Dispute Resolution Policy and Enterprise Bargaining Agreement.

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Breaches should be reported according to the processes outlined in the relevant policies. Records will be maintained including outcomes via the Stuartholme School risk management tool.

Stuartholme School will also record, monitor and report to the School Board and others as appropriate regarding any breaches of the Strategy.

## 5. Risk Management Plans for High Risk Activities and Special Events

Stuartholme School is committed to identifying, assessing, eliminating and minimising risks and the monitoring of risk to the safety of students on an ongoing basis. Stuartholme School's Risk Management Framework outlines the school's commitment to manage risk, including appropriate records of decisions made and actions taken in relation to risks to children.

Stuartholme School utilises Plan Check Go to conduct risk assessments for all activities including high risk activities. Risk Assessments for high-risk activities such as outdoor education, tours and sports must be approved by the Deputy Principal.

## 6. Compliance with the Requirements of the Blue Card System

Stuartholme School has developed a process in accordance with the Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000 relating to the screening of employees and the No Card, No Start legislation, in such a way that limits risk to children. In particular, the School will not:

- Employ or engage any person without a positive notice blue card/exemption card (if they are required to hold one in accordance with the Act and the No Card, No Start legislation).
- Continue the employment or engagement of any person who:
  - does not renew their blue card within the required renewal period as required by the No Card, No Start legislation;
  - is unable to present a current blue card/exemption card/positive notice as required by the No Card, No Start legislation;
  - does not provide identification documents where applicable;
  - is issued with a negative notice;
  - becomes a restricted person, including those in restricted employment;
  - has their blue card/exemption card cancelled or suspended; or
  - does not consent to pre-employment screening (employees only).

Stuartholme School maintains a Blue Card register, in addition to the Blue Card Services Organisation Portal, to ensure that details of blue card renewals, applications and changes in status are accurate. The School will delink persons when they are no longer with the organisation and act to remind staff to keep their blue card current.

## 7. Communication and Support

The School makes this strategy available to students, parents and staff via its Website and myStuartholme Portal.

Stuartholme School is committed to training employees in relation to risks to students and will conduct this training regularly via annual formal training events, informal updates at staff meetings and regular discussions between managers and their staff. Such training aims to help staff identify risks of harm and how to handle disclosures or suspicions of harm and outline this strategy.

Stuartholme School is also committed to educating students and parents about these issues, and creating an environment which encourages students to raise concerns they may have for themselves, or others, relating to harm or inappropriate behaviour. The School has processes for

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seeking and incorporating input and feedback with students and their families. Stuartholme School respects diversity and seeks to facilitate effective communication and engagement.

Stuartholme School promotes participation and empowerment of students and provides opportunity for their voice and ideas to be heard, and space to express their needs and concerns. The School actively encourages our students to take part in the decision-making process, particularly in matters affecting them. Stuartholme School creates opportunities for involvement and seeks input and feedback to inform our policies, procedures and practices.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

Stuartholme School is responsible for developing and implementing this Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy and related policies and procedures to ensure it fulfils its obligations. All workers at Stuartholme School are responsible for understanding, promoting and acting in compliance with this Child Risk Management Strategy and related policies and procedures.

## COMPLIANCE AND MONITORING

This strategy will be reviewed annually, or following an incident if required. Stuartholme School will also record, monitor and report to the School Board and others as appropriate regarding any breaches of the Strategy.

In addition, Stuartholme School is committed to other various compliance and monitoring arrangements made under relevant policies and procedures.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- Board Code of Conduct
- Code of Conduct
- Dispute Resolution Policy
- Formal Complaints Policy
- Parental & Visitor Code of Conduct
- Risk Management Framework
- Stuartholme School Blue Card Register
- Student Positive Expectations and Behaviour Guidelines
- Student Protection Processes and Guidelines

## REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed annually, or as necessitated by legislation.